

# Greater Righteousness: Matthew 5:27-30

The EXPERIENCE Bible Study

Rev. John F. Kenney

September 7, 2021



# Overview: Verses 27-30

Jesus uses adultery to expound on several presuppositions such as:

1. Our sexuality is *a gift from God*, not our private possession to dispose of as we will.
2. Right and wrong are not a matter of individual decision, but of the *revealed will of God*.
3. My sex life *does involve* others, and may hurt them even if I am unaware of it.

## Overview (Cont.)

4. There are orders or structures of human life established by God into which my individual life should fit, including sexual and family structures.
5. Matters of right and wrong ***can't be handled*** legalistically but go to the roots of human life in the heart and intentions.



# Verse Breakdown: (Verse 27)

1. Matthew's formal structure – reaffirmation, radicalization & situational application is clearly evident in verses 27-30

## 2. REAFFIRMATION:

The Decalogue's (The Law) absolute prohibition of "adultery" refers specifically to a *married woman having sexual relations with a man other than her husband*, AND it's to be distinguish from "fornication" (*illicit sex in general*)

Adultery is considered a violation of a husband's exclusive right to his wife and the assurance that the children born to her was his own. Both the woman and the man involved were considered guilty of adultery, whether or not the man was married.

# Adultery Reaffirmed

The teaching of Jesus does not abolish the Law's command against adultery, but rather affirms the validity and the authority of the Law.

***"You have heard the commandment that says You must not commit adultery."(verse 27)***

# Adultery Radicalized: Verse 28

## RADICALIZATION:

***"But I say anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. So if you eye - even your good eye - causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."*** (vs. 28-29)

1. Jesus radicalizes the intent of the Law with a pronouncement that every man that looks upon a woman with a sexual desire is already an adulterer in his heart.

## Adultery Radicalized: (Cont.)

1. Strictly interpreted, this text does not deal with natural sexual desire and its associated fantasy, but rather with the ***intentional lustful look*** at the wife of another.



2. This radical demand of Jesus should not be domesticated (softened) because ***the major issue here is not so much the physical deed BUT the intention of the heart.***

3. The heart's intention makes one ***guilty or innocent*** before the Law of God.

# Adultery Command Situationally Applied (vs. 29-30)

## SITUATIONAL APPLICATION:

***"So if your eye - even your good eye – causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your hand – even your strong hand – causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."* (vs. 29-30)**

1. Matthew does not leave the disciple desiring to live by the greater righteousness demands by the kingdom of God helpless

# Adultery Command Situationally Applied (Cont.)

Matthew uses sayings of Jesus that show *from time to time, the disciple will in fact NOT live up/measure up to this absolute standard and that such violations must be resisted by radical measures.*

Matthew doesn't just write explanations of what Jesus said – he combines various sayings of Jesus from the tradition to create a *place of tension* that helps generate the disciples' creative interpretation.

Jesus aims to *heighten the disciples' awareness to the perspective of life* in light of the kingdom of God.

# Prayer

Almighty God, have mercy on us! As we reflect upon the nature of Your radical word, we see just how much we need to grow. Lord, may Your grace help us to **conform** ourselves to the intent of Your word. May we **reject** the idea that You have called us to a causal relationship but help us to **embrace** the life-changing power that resides in Your word.

Holy Spirit, take **control** of our minds and **transform** our hearts that we may give **greater testimony** to Your indwelling presence in our lives. In Jesus name, Amen!

